

Amendments to and Listing of the Claims

1. (Original) A method for sterilizing industrial products comprising the steps of  
conditioning an industrial product to be sterilized by placing the product in  
a chamber, evacuating the chamber, pulsing steam and/or heated inert gas into the  
chamber, and re-evacuating the chamber;  
injecting a sterilent gas into the chamber;  
introducing an overpressure of inert gas into the chamber;  
holding the product in the chamber until the products is sterilized;  
degassing the product.
2. (Original) The method for sterilizing industrial products of claim 1 wherein  
the heated inert gas is Nitrogen and wherein the sterilent gas is ethylene oxide.
3. (Original) The method for sterilizing industrial products of claim 1 further  
comprising the step of evacuating the chamber after holding the product in the chamber and  
pulsing in steam and/or heated inert gas into the chamber.
4. (Original) The method for sterilizing industrial products of claim 3 wherein  
the heated insert gas is Nitrogen and wherein the sterilent gas is ethylene oxide.
5. (Currently amended) The method for sterilizing industrial products of claim 4  
wherein the evacuating of the chamber results in the pressure in the range of 1 to 3 inches of  
mercury, said evacuation of the chamber includes the step of real-time monitoring said  
concentration of ethylene oxide gas in the headspace.
6. (Original) The method for sterilizing industrial products of claim 3 wherein  
the step of degassing the product is accomplished by evacuating the chamber, pressurizing the

chamber with 3 to 50 inches of mercury with an inert gas, and repeating until the product is degassed.

7. (Original) The method for sterilizing industrial products of claim 3 wherein the step of degassing the product is accomplished by evacuating the chamber down to 3 to 7 inches of mercury and pulsing the chamber with 5 to 9 inches of heated inert gas.

8. (Currently amended) The method for sterilizing industrial products of claims 6 ~~and or~~ 7 wherein the step of degassing the product is further accomplished by injecting the chamber with warm air.

9. (Cancelled).

10. (Currently amended) The method for sterilizing industrial products of claim ~~9~~ 5 wherein the step of degassing the product is accomplished by evacuating the chamber, pressurizing the chamber with 3 to 50 inches of mercury with Nitrogen, and repeating until the product is degassed.

11. (Currently amended) The method for sterilizing industrial products of claim ~~9~~ 5 wherein the step of degassing the product is accomplished by evacuating the chamber down to 3 to 7 inches of mercury and pulsing the chamber with 5 to 9 inches of heated Nitrogen.

12. (Currently amended) The method for sterilizing industrial products of claims 10 ~~and or~~ 11 wherein the step of degassing the product is further accomplished by injecting the chamber with warm air.

13. (Original) The method of claim 6 wherein evacuating the chamber as a part of degassing the product is performed at a rate in the range of 0.1 to 0.5 inches per minute.

14. (Original) A method for sterilizing industrial products comprising the steps of:

conditioning an industrial product to be sterilized by placing the product in a chamber, evacuating the chamber, pulsing steam and/or heated inert gas into the chamber, and re-evacuating the chamber;

injecting ethylene oxide gas into the chamber;

introducing 5 to 15 inches of mercury of Nitrogen overpressure into the chamber;

holding the product in the chamber while the product is sterilized;

evacuating the chamber to a pressure of 1 to 3 inches of mercury;

pulsing in steam and/or heated Nitrogen into the chamber; and

injecting the chamber with warm air.

15. (Original) The method of claim 14 wherein evacuating the chamber to a pressure of 1 to 3 inches of mercury is done at a rate of 0.1 to 0.5 inches per minute.

16. (Original) The method for sterilizing industrial products of claim 15 wherein the step of pulsing in steam and/or heated Nitrogen into the chamber is repeated one or more times.